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ABSTRACT

This issue of Loblolly, a magazine published by high school students, features interviews with women of Panola County, Texas who are grandmothers. The interviews are designed to facilitate an understanding of the role of women in the development of East Texas. Numerous reproductions of photographs appear throughout the volume--some are quite old, others recent. (DB)

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Volume XVII No. 2 Summer 1990

Contents

Page 2 - Grandmothers by: Amy Singleton, Renea Barr, Kena Baxley, Tammie Bridges, Melissa Hughey, Shannon Hurst, Lorrie James, Jeniffer Johnson, Mark Johnson, Melody Mims, Kim Smith, Crystal Strain, Danny Weems, and Ashley Wilkerson.

Page 48 - Clara Latham by Inez Downing, Sabrina Wilkerson, and Amy Singleton.

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Cover Photo: Clara and Joe Latham of Gary.

GRANDMOTHERS

In order to discover more of the role of women in the development of East Texas we decided to take a new approach in our ongoing search. We decided to go out and visit with a grandmother we know, our own and others. We asked them about their grandmothers and in some cases their mothers. In that way, we found out more about how women lived and contributed to our culture back into the 19th century.

This trip back over four or five generations gave us a chance to meet these people who in some cases are long gone from the scene and who we knew little of before. So join us in our discovery and share in their knowledge, wisdom, and courage of an earlier Gary, Panola County, and East Texas.

Interview with Lorene Adams about her grandmother, Boashie Ann Bowlin - by Kena Baxley.

Q - What was your grandmother's name?
A - Boashie Ann Bowlin and she married a Woodfin. John Barnett Woodfin, they married way back in the 1800s.

Q - Do you know when and where she was born?
A - No, I don't know. As far as I can remember she lived in Shelby County, but I don't know if she was born there.

Q - Do you know how many kids she had?
A - There were eight that I knew of. I don't know if she had any that died or not.

Q - Where did they live?
A - Shelby County in the Tennessee Community.

Q - What did she do for a living?
A - They were just farmers.

Q - What church did they go to?
A - They went to a Presbyterian church in the Tennessee Community. They were devout Presbyterians, "Till they were converted," as my sister s[illegible] They believed about what the Baptis[illegible] elieved.

Q - What school did her children attend?
A - There was an elementary school in the Tennessee Community, where they went until it was consolidated. Then, I guess you could say they were educated in the Tennessee Community, Timpson, and Tenaha. They all went their separate ways to school.

Q - How did they live? What kind of problems did they face?
A - Just like any old farmer, from hand to mouth. They had a lot of crops and a big house. They just lived an old everyday farmer's life.

Q - How did they get their food?
A - From their crops. My grandparents had a syrup mill and we had lots of syrup. Everyone in the community would bring their syrup to that syrup mill. They raised a lot of food. People then didn't know what going to town was. The only time they would go is for the essentials, like flour and sugar.

Q - What did they do for entertainment?
A - They went to church, and singings. They had box suppers, dances, which were mostly square dances, and parties. People would throw a party for the young folks, because there was no way to get to Carthage, nowhere else to go, no picture shows to go to. They would just go to parties. They had things called poundings, where everyone would bring a pound of food and eat it. My grandma loved to fish. She would fish until she dropped. She would also visit and help the sick. I bet she delivered 4,000 babies. When people got sick they called her.

Q - Can you describe your grandmother?
A - Jolly, jolly, jolly. She was a good natured woman. Everybody loved her. I don't remember her ever getting mad. She was firm. When she told you something you better have done it. She made you mind. She was a pretty big women, and when she laughed she shook all over. We

would tease her about shaking the house when she laughed. She had dark hair and dark eyes.

Q - Did she do a lot in the community?
A - Oh, yes everyone knew her. Everyone lived far from the school and when it rained they stopped off at grandma's house and she fed them. I can remember her saying, "Let's go see how many I'm going to have to cook for." She was always feeding someone. Nothing happened that she didn't know about or help with. Not just her, the whole community. She was always keeping kids and cooking.

Q - Did you live close to your grandmother? Did you see her a lot?
A - Tennessee Community is about 10 miles, if you go like you would now. We used to go through the bottoms in a wagon. There were very few cars around then. We thought we had to go every week to her house.

Q - Did you enjoy going?
A - Oh yes, we were a real close family. When we got to her house, her and grandpa would pull us out of the wagon like they hadn't seen us in a year.

Q - Do you remember when your grandmother died?
A - September 27, about 1927.

Q - Do you remember her age when she passed away?
A - Oh, I wouldn't know, but she's been dead about 62 years. She was probably about 55 - 60 years old.

Q - Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your grandmother?
A - No, she just did everything they did in olden days.

LORENE ADAMS

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9

Interview with Ozella Weir about her step-mother's mother, Sunshine - by Shannon Hurst.

I can't remember my grandmother that well, what I do remember about her was that she was a good woman.

Now I can remember my step-mother's mother. She was a good woman too. She was an indian. Her name was Sunshine.

Q - Could Sunshine read or write?
A - Oh yes, she was very smart. She read us the Bible all the time when we went to see her. We did not see her very often because she lived in Tennessee, and we lived in Texas. I think I had the world's greatest grandmother.

Q - What kind of house did she have?
A - It was an old log cabin. I can remember when we went to see her. We had to sleep on the floor. One time I thought I would be sick from lye soap.

The last thing I can remember about my grandmother was that she was on her death bed, and she turned to me and asked for her Bible. You can't imagine how much she loved the Bible. Well, the next morning she was dead. All I can tell you is that I have tried to live my life like her.

I only got to see my father's mother once. I don't remember to much about her. All I can tell you is that I remember she kept the Bible right beside her all the time.

10

OZELLA WEIR

Interview with my grandmother Ernie B. Mims, about her grandmother, Louella Webster Stapells - Melody Mims.

Q - What is your grandmother's name?
A - Louella Webster Stapells.
Q - When was your grandmother born?
A - I can't remember the exact date but the year was 1876.
Q - Where did she live?
A - She lived in the south hills of Kentucky.
Q - How many children did she have?
A - Three. That was considered to be a small family back in those days.

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Q - How many children were in family when she was a child?
A - There were nine. She had eight brothers and one sister.

Q - What did she do for a living?
A - She was a housewife. In her time a housewife had to more things than housewives today. They had to make clothing, feed the family, help in the gardens, etc.

Q - Did they have any problems keeping the family fed?
A - No, they were farmers so every year they put up fresh vegetables to last and they had cows, pigs, and sheep for meat and milk.

Q - What were her hobbies?
A - I remember she loved to cook. She made quilts for the children to stay warm in the winter.

Q - How did her family travel to Kentucky?
A - They rode in covered wagons.

Q - How far did she live from the nearest community?
A - The closest neighbors or store was about five miles.

Q - Where did she attend church?
A - She went to a Missionary Baptist church in town.

Q - Where did the family originate?

A - Her father's family moved from North Carolina in a covered wagon. I've always wondered how long it took them to travel that far. Her mother's family was in a full blooded Indian tribe, that's all I can remember about her.

Q - When did she die?
A - She died December 10, 1945, right after my husband and I got married.

ERNIE B. MIMS

Interview with my step-grandmother, Gladys Maxey, about her mother, Maud Smith Higgins - by Kim Smith.

Q - What is your mother's full name?
A - Vassie Maud Smith. Her married name was Higgins.

Q - When and where was she born?
A - At Jacksonville, Texas. On July 7, 1897.

Q - When did she pass away?
A - She died on March 10, 1970, at age 73.

Q - What was her childhood life like such as, hobbies, family life, and so on.

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A - She told us that she had a good childhood, and that they had to work all the time because they lived on a farm. They hoed and piled cotton.

Q - Where did she go to church at?

A - She went to a Baptist Church, the Aneaec Baptist Church.

Q - At what age did she start dating?

A - I think she said she was 18 when she started dating. In those days they didn't believe in letting them get married early, they had to be older. They wouldn't even let them court or even go out. Besides that, in those days they didn't have automobiles or anything like that. My dad courted mom on horseback.

Q - When did she get married?

A - In 1916, they were married in their buggy, because the were moving to Brownwood, Texas. So, the preacher came out to the buggy to marry them. After that they traveled all the way from there to Brownwood. Daddy had gotten a job on a farm for him and mother. They lived on a ranch and they just worked for these people.

Q - How many children did they have?

A - They had eight kids.

Q - What were some of the things that happened during the times they had the kids?

A - Well, first they had three girls born, then they had twins. The twins were myself and my twin, which was their first boy. My name is Gladys Mae and his was Gannie Rae. We were in a tent in Pilly, Texas. That was when daddy got his job in Humble Oil Refinery Company, which is now Exxon, and it was in the bull gang,the bull gang was where you went anywhere in the plant and worked.

In those days you got paid fifty cents an hour. He worked there till they finally got a union started and they started receiving more money. Then finally, before he left Humble and retired, he was in the welding department. He was a first class welder. He put in 32 years. Anyway, my twin died when he was 4 months old, because the neighbor lady had come over and her child had whooping cough, and had given it to my twin, therefore he got real sick, and his little drum busted, and then he got double pneumonia. Daddy would never let them take him to the hospital in Houston, because it was so far away. The local doctor came everyday. Mother cried and cried and she asked the Lord to save him. When he did die, they had services and daddy fell down on the ground and cried and said there wasn't a God, because he had taken his only son away from him. After they had two more girls, they finally had their son.

Back before the third girl, mother said her and the two girls were going from Jacksonville to Baytown to see daddy. In those days you didn't have automobiles unless you were very rich. So, she started out in a wagon with two horses and she said the only thing that the children had two eat some biscuits and syrup. The two girls were my older sisters, Merle and Beatrice. She said while going thru town the law met her at one side of town and told her "Mam your not safe here so he rode with her all the way across the town, until she got passed the work camps and it was safe. It had become dark so she decided to stop for the night. She asked the townsmen

where there was a place to stay in the old church house, but it was said to be haunted. She said that it didn't make any difference, cause if it was the Lord's house she'd have no worries. She stopped there and during the night a horrible storm came up. Their dog Towser paced nervously all night long. She had put the tubs of their belongings in front of the doors to keep them closed, but the doors blew open anyway. She said she never saw or hear anyone. The only thing was that the dog was nervous all night long, like there was a presence of someone. But no one appeared,during that time the main one of the horses she had, the real young one, got his nose caught in a side stem out of the tree but she managed to get him down and she had, in those days, medicine along with them so, she doctored the horse and he made it with her all the way to Pilly where they met my dad.

Q - What was the last few years of your mother's life like?

A - She was in the nursing home. She had been sick about ten years, she was very ill. She had ten surgeries. She died in the nursing home, because my dad was old and wasn't able to take care of her, and she wasn't able to take care of herself. Although, she wasn't in the nursing home to long, about a year before she died.

In our lifetime we have a pretty good like.

GLADYS MAXEY

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her feet wet. they would fuss at my aunt for making the dresses so full because there was so much material to wash. My grandmother would say, "Well I want them big so when I go to step a log, I can step it."

Q - Was she fat?

A - No, she was tiny. She was never real thin, but she was never fat. All my life I never remember her being big. She was the most pleasant person I've ever seen. She ate everything we ate. She would sit down at the table with us and eat all the vegetables and things out of the garden.

I got to sleep with her when she stayed with us and that was my biggest thing. So, I would go to bed with her and I would lay real still so she would go to sleep real quick. She would go to snoring, and do you know how she snored? "Au - Puh." That's the noise she made, just like that. I would lay there and listen because I had never heard anybody snore like that before.

Q - What religion was she?

A - She was Baptist as far as I can remember. Right before grandpa died, they would always fix up those big dinners. They would load up the wagon with the horses, and they all go to the big singings they could go to. They went to Shiloh, and everywhere else. Just anywhere they could get to.

Q - How did she wear her hair?

A - She wore it pulled back. And it was real white, she had real white, fluffy hair. But she didn't have a lot of hair. To me there was never a granny I have ever seen that looked more like a grandma than she did. I thought all old people should look like my grandmother.

Q - Tell About the medicine she

Interview with my great aunt, Eunice Carnes, about her grandmother, Mahulda Ann Bozeman - by Ashley Wilkerson.

Q - Tell me everything you can remember about your grandmother.
A - Her name was Mahulda Ann Bozeman. She married my grandfather, Jacob S. Sistrunk. My grandpa died, and he was quite a bit older than my grandmother. He died when she was about forty years old. So, she lived amongst the children. One of my aunts didn't have any children of her own, and that's where she made her home, but she visited through the year. She came to our house every summer. Us kids we adored her and she never said anything about the noise we made, and we would run, play, and everything. She would shell peas too, I can still see her sitting there shelling the peas.

Q - How tall was she?
A - I'd say about five feet. When I was about ten years old her sight went to failing her. So us kids would run up to her and make her guess who we were, and she knew all of our voices. I would make her measure with me every year. Finally, I got to be taller than she was and she would get so tickled over that, that she just die out laughing. She wore these clothes that my aunt made her. She had two under slips, with great big ruffled skirts around them. They were gathered, and gathered, and gathered. They made big ole' homespun dresses with long sleeves, down to their ankle. She wore these high top shoes. So she never got

made.
A - She had a recipe for her medicine that she made herself. So my daddy would go and pick all the fruits she needed out of the garden. Like prunes, raisins, dates, and currants, they would grind them up in the ole' sausage mill. Then when she got it all ground up she would put senna leaves for the laxative part. They balled it all up where it was moist enough where they could still work with it. When they got it all worked up she would divide it into balls and wrap it real nice where nothing could happen to it. And every night before she would go to bed, she would pinch of a little of that medicine. But that was the only medicine I ever heard of my grandmother taking.

Q - How much education did she have?
A - I think she went to the 4th or 5th grade. I don't really know because she died when I was just starting to grow up and when I was just starting to get interested in that kind of stuff. She had enough education to read and write because she read the Bible to us.

Q - How many children did she have?
A - Well, let's see. She had Uncle Sellas, Uncle Tom, and my daddy, Uncle Warren, Uncle Joe, Aunt Maggie, Aunt Lucy, and Aunt Salley. So I guess she had 8 kids. And they all lived to a pretty old age, not any of them died when they were young.

Q - Where did she live when she wasn't living with you?
A - Well she lived in Riderville, but now they call it Hazel.

Q - Where did she live when she wasn't living with you?

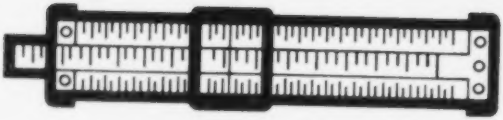
A - Well she lived in Riderville, but now they call it Hazel.

Q - How old was she when she died?

A - She was 94.

Q - Did they always wear dresses?

A - Oh yea, you wouldn't catch her with a pair if pants on for anything. She had to have two or three big ole' under skirts to go under her skirt no matter how hot it was or what. I guess she was so little and she didn't get any exercise. And she stayed cold and they wrapped her up. After she got real old they had this old rocking chair and they padded it real good, then they would go get grandma and put her in that rocking chair right in front of the fireplace. So they would bring her breakfast so she wouldn't have to get in the cold.



EUNICE CARNES

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Interview with my grandmother, Omie Webb, about her grandmother, Mary Jane Weatherford. - by Mark Johnson.

Q - Who was your grandmother and when was she born?
A - She was Mary Jane Weatherford and she was born in 1851, on a farm around Paris, Arkansas.

Q - What was her childhood like?
A - She was an orphan. She was raised by her husband's father.

Q - How did they make a living?
A - They farmed, as far as I know that was the only way they had of making a living.

Q - Who did she marry?
A - She married John Luman, I'm not sure what year.

Q - What job did he have?
A - He was a school teacher and also a postmaster. He was usually paid with produce.

Q - Did they live in Arkansas all of their life?
A - They left Arkansas in 1891 on November the 22nd in covered wagons. There were three families and they each traveled in a covered wagon. They arrived in Nacogdoches, Texas the 24th of December, 1891.

Q - Did they begin farming when they arrived in Nacogdoches?
A - They farmed all of their lives from then on. Grandmother died in 1901, at the age of 50.

Q - When was your mother born?
A - She was born in 1870.

Q - Was she educated or did she attend school?
A - She went to school. Her father was a school teacher, so she got most of her education at home. She was pretty well educated for that time.

Q - Who did she marry and when?
A - She married Lee Oliver in 1885 in Paris, Arkansas.

Q - How did they make a living?
A - They farmed there and after they came to Texas.

Q - Did your mother have any brothers or sisters?
A - She had three sisters and six brothers.

Q - Everyone helped on the farm didn't they?
A - Yes.

Q - What kind of tools did you use for farming?
A - We used turning plows, Georgia Stocks, and arrow plows,which were pulled by horses.

Q - How often would they go to town?
A - We would go to town about once or twice a month.

Q - How far did you live from town?
A - We lived about ten miles from town. We traveled by wagon. The roads were terrible.

Q - What did you go to town for?
A - We went to buy flour, salt, sugar, and everything else that we couldn't raise. We also went to carry the cotton to the gin. When they carried cotton to the market they had to spend the night in town at the wagon yard.

Q - What was the typical weekday like back then?
A - We would get up around six o'clock. My sister would go milk the cow and I

would cook breakfast and fix our school lunches. Then we would walk to school about three miles. When we returned from school she would milk the cow again while I fixed supper and studied. Then we would gather around the organ. I would play and we all would sing until bedtime. It was pretty much like that everyday, through the winter.

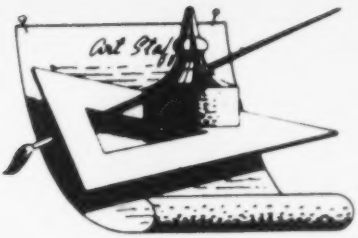
In the summer we got up earlier, fixed breakfast, cleaned the house, and then we would go to the field. We would work in the field until about eleven o'clock, by then mother would have dinner ready. We would eat and rest to about one o'clock. Then we would go back to the field and work until we couldn't see how to.

Q - Was the weekend any different?
A - On Saturday and Sunday we would all gather at somebody's house and play ball all day long. We played town ball, it was something like baseball. Then we would have the ball on the outside of the pen. They would try to hit the ones on the inside of the pen. The last one that got hit was the winner.

Q - Did you attend church on Sundays?
A - Yes, on Sundays we would go to church.

Q - Was there a lot of different churches to choose from?
A - No, we had one small church in our community, and everybody went whether he or she was a Baptist, Methodist, or whatever.

Q - Was each Community pretty much isolated?
A - We had a lot of neighbors, but we didn't know anyone outside our community. We attended church and school



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in the same building.

Q - Was everyone in the same room or grade?

A - No, we had grades from primary to seventh, today its known as one to eighth.

Q - When did your mother die?

A - She died in April, 1957 at the age of eighty - seven.

Interview with my grandmother, Madeline Lewis, about her grandmother, Vader Sessum Pike - by Jeniffer Johnscn.

Q - What was your grandmother's name?

A - My grandmother's name was Vader Sessum Pike.

Q - Her maiden name?

A - Her maiden name was Sessum.

Q - Where did she live during her life?

A - She lived in these communities- Harmony and Corinth Communities.

Q - Is this where she attended school?

A - She attended school at Pike's school. I don't know how much she went to school, but probably not very much.

Q - When was she married and to whom?

A - I don't know when she was married, but she married Jake Pike.

Q - How many children did she have?

A - We'll have to recount them. Let's see there was Aunt Addie Bee, Aunt Callie Mae, Aunt Bess, my mother, Aunt Margorie.

She had ten children, seven girls and three boys. Aunt Ruth, she died.

Q - How did the family make a living?

A - My grandpa was a farmer. They raised cows and pigs.

Q - How did she wash clothes?

A - She washed them on a rub board, and an iron pot with a fire built under it. You would boil clothes and take them out, put them on the pot and rub them on the rub board. Then they would put some more water in a big old wash tub and rinse them. They would boil them in an iron pot, a big old iron pot with wood under it, then boil them and poke them down with a stick. Put the white ones in first, then take them out and put them over the rub board and in a wash tub and draw up water from the well to pour in there. They would rub them and they were clean. And they used lye soap that they made. That's the only kind of soap they had, for washing, bathing, washing dishes, washing clothes, your hair and everything else. Everything. That's how she washed.

Q - How did the family get most of their food?

A - They raised most of it. The biggest part of it. My grandfather even raised tobacco, I remember that. They raised most of their food and the rest of their food they went in a horse and a buggy, they might go into Gary or Timpson once a month or every two or three months to get flour and sugar and stuff.

Q - Do you remember what her last house looked like?

A - Oh, yes! I vividly remember that. She lived many years right here at the

end of my home place. My father built her a house there, many years before she passed away. It was a white house, it was a pretty little house, with a lot of flowers. She liked flowers. It had a living room, a dining room, and I think it had two bedrooms. I remember the many years she lived there. That's when I was with my grandmother the most, after I got married. She moved when my daddy built her this house out here at the end of my home place.

Q - Do you have a fond memory about you and your grandmother?
A - Yeah, I used to spend lots of nights with my grandmother, after I was grown. After I was married and we lived in Longview we'd come down here a lot. Every week or when my husband was off. And a lot of nights I'd spend the night with my grandmother. She always told me how we were kin to a lot of people. I didn't know how we were kin to the Ritters. This past year was the last time I went to the Gary Round-Up, they had it every year. People would come and everybody that was there from a certain class would stand up. This particular year Tex Ritter flew in from Houston, he was the guest speaker. And I came from Longview, then we went to the Round-Up. Then some time the next week or two, I don't remember when, I spent the night with my grandmother and I asked her how we were kin to Tex Ritter and the Ritters. And she told me then how we were kin. And I didn't remember exactly how we were kin, last night or the night before my mother told me. The best I remember my grandmother's mother and Tex Ritter's mother were sisters. I think that's right.

Q - How old were you when you saw your grandmother last?
A - She died July 4, 1965. I can remember that because I carried my husband to a heart specialist that day in Houston. I saw her the day before that July 3, 1965, that's the last time I saw her.

Q - Do you think her schooling was very different from yours?
A - Oh, yes!

Q - How?
A - Well, I don't know the extent of her schooling, but I doubt if it was very much. Even though she could read and write and stuff. She probably didn't go to school over three years. Of course she had to walk. Pike's school is where I believe she went, back over in here somewhere. And they just had the basic things reading, writing, and arithmetic. And she probably didn't go to school much.

MADELINE LEWIS

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Interview with Margaret Simonson about her grandmother, Hester Asinia Stockwell - by Lorrie James.

Q - Tell me everything you can remember about your grandmother?

A - Her name was Hester Asinia Stockwell. Her maiden name was Hester Asinia Myers. She was born September 3, 1882. In Steven, Indiana. She passed away August 16, 1929 at Prat, Kansas. Her childhood I did not know much about. I can remember when I was a child I went to her house and played. She was a firm handed lady.She had beautiful red wavy hair, almost a bronze red. My grandpa was a janitor at the school for many years. All of us kids loved them both. I do remember that she had electricity in her house at Prat. My parents didn't have electricity on the farm. She died very suddenly and I was quite young. She was a very good cook. I can remember her pitting and canning cherries. I didn't live very close to them so I didn't get to see her very often. Maybe once or twice a year. So I didn't know what she did for entertainment when she was a young child.

I can remember that they had a porch that had a porch swing and we all used to swing on it. All of us kids used the porch swing. My grandmother and grandfather would get out there with us and sing, and have a real good time. Her hobbies were sewing and crocheting. She did work outside the home. She had four girls and two boys.

Q - Did she go to school and where?
A - I suppose she went to school in

MARGARET SIMONSON

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Kansas. She may have started school in Indiana. She could read and write, she was a reader of the Bible. I can remember that. She was very young when she died in 1929. In 1929 I was a freshman in high school. When I was growing up I didn't have access to find out things about her.

Q - Did she go to church?

A - Oh yes, she always went to church. She was a Christian lady.

Q - Did she get married?

A - Yes, she and my grandfather were married for many years.

Q - To whom was she married?

A - John Ruben Stockwell

Q - How many children did she have?

A - There were six children, they are all deceased now. Her and her husband's life was real nice. They lived on a little farm in the southeast corner of Kansas. I can remember a strawberry patch that was joy for us kids to get strawberries. They had a big garden that was in their backyard. I only have the memories she left me with.

Interview with my grandmother, Ruby Weaver, about her mother, Mary Elizabeth Hamilton - by Tammie Bridges.

Q - What was her name?

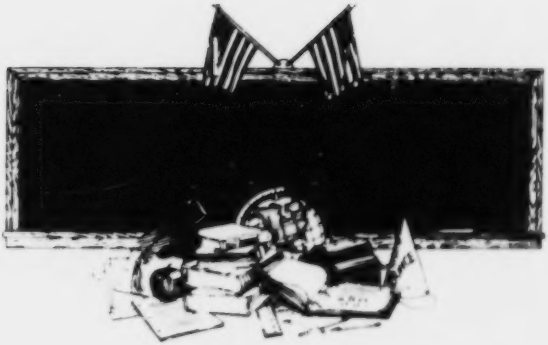
A - Mary Elizabeth Hamilton

Q - Where was she born?

A - Salisau, Oklahoma, Indian territory, before Oklahoma became a state on August 17, 1889.

Q - How was her childhood?

A - Grandma was a full - blooded Indian,



RUBY WEAVER

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her parents were Indians and she was taught to farm and share in doing the chores. There was very little there for fun and games. When she was 17 they moved from Oklahoma to Alabama. She worked in her father's store, in his corn mill, and on the farm. She had a very hard life.

Q - When did she meet my great-grandfather?
A - When she left Oklahoma to go to Alabama at 17. She met him when she was 18 years old. They were married. They waited for one year to have children. They had three girls.

Her first child left her blind. She was able to see enough so she wouldn't run into things. Even though she could barely see she still made sure us kids were fed and the house was clean.

Q - How long was she married?
A - She was married for 62 happy years.

Q - When did she die?
A - October 4, 1978.

Interview with Peggy Tinkle about her grandmother, Maude Driscoll - by Danny Weems.

Q - What is your name?
A - Peggy Tinkle.

Q - What is your grandmother's name?
A - Maude Driscoll.

Q - When and where was your grandmother born?
A - She was born in 1878, in Oklahoma, on a reservation.

Q - What was her childhood and family like?
A - She was an only child and her parents

PEGGY TINKLE

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were a white man and a full blood Indian mother. She went through several problems due to this arrangement as a child. She was made fun of by other children at school. She did not finish school because she got married at the age of fifteen. She then moved to Huntsville where her husband lived and worked at a prison for women. He was a guard there. They raised most of their own food in their small garden.

She started church at a young age and went to church regularly as a child and later as an adult. She was a Baptist and went to church until she became too ill.

She moved to downtown Huntsville after her husband retired as a guard at the prison. She had eight children who all graduated with honors.

She was a small built person who was liked by everyone. She had a great personality. She had T-B when I was a child and later had cancer. After her husband died she lived with several different children until she went in a nursing home. After years of suffering she died of cancer in 1974, at the age of 96. She lived a full life.

Interview with my grandmother, Helen Miller about her grandmother, Corabell Pare King - by Melissa Hughey.

Q - What was your grandmother's name?
A - Corabell Pare King
O - Where was she from?

HELEN MILLER

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A - Tennessee and was of Dutch and Irish descent.

Q - When was she born, when and how did she die?

A - I really don't know when she was born, sometime during the late 1800's. I don't know when she died. She lived about 74 years and died of cancer. She was really sick. Sometimes she would be in a comma for days.

Q - How many children did she have?

A - She had six, but lost two. One died at birth and she killed the other one. She was sleeping and rolled on it and accidentally smothered it. No one ever told her. She died not knowing.

Q - Was she married? How many times?

A - Yes, only once. My grandfather's name was Christopher Columbus King. They were married thirty years.

Q - Basically, what kind of life did they live?

A - Grandma was a simple housewife. They were sharecroppers and moved a lot up and down the river.

Q - What did she do in her spare time?

A - Well, with all the work that had to be done she didn't have much spare time. But while she walked around and worked or anytime she saw something with pretty flowers on it, she'd pick it up and keep it. She had a huge collection of "pretties". She stacked them on her bed and would leave just enough room to fold the covers back and sleep.

Q - Well, that was pretty different. What else did she do?

A - Well, she did wear an awful lot of dresses. When one got dirty, she'd put

another one over it and when it got cold, she'd put on more and more and as it warmed up, she'd take the dresses off one by one. We have a picture of her and she looked like she weighed 300 pounds, but she didn't even weigh 100 pounds actually.

Q - Was your grandmother involved in church?

A - Oh, yeah. church and chores were her life. She'd walk 10-15 miles to church in the middle of the heat in July.

Q - Did she have schooling?

A - That was also typical. She had to walk 5 miles to it. It was in one building with a wood burning stove. During the summer they'd let 'em out for a while to work in the fields. That's where ya'll get your summer vacation.

Q - What was their married life like?

A - While they lived together, she lived in one end of the house and he lived in the other. They stayed in separate rooms. She could only go in when he invited her. One time, they were going to go to California, but right before one of the grandchildren burnt the house down. After that, he moved his stuff into a half dug-out and he bought her own house.

Q - Granny, I know there are some mysterious things about your past. Were there any with your grandmother?

A - Not quite like me. But one time when she was pregnant, she was chopping wood and killed a snake. She reached down to pick up some wood and the snake jumped at her. When it did, she swallowed real hard in fear. After the child was born and grown anytime you mention a snake she

felt like she was swallowing one.

Q - Was her and or her family special or recognized in any way?

A - Well, I've never been able to track it down, but there was a book written about her and her family when they were settling in America. It used to be Dennison, Texas. I don't know whatever happened to it.

Interview with my grandmother, Frances Barr, about her great-grandmother, Minnie Barton - by Renea Barr.

Q - Where was your grandmother born?

A - She was born in Marion County Georgia.

Q - What were some problems she had growing up?

A - When she was young there was no running water and no electricity. They lived in a two bedroom house. She and her family worked in the fields. She chopped cotton, pulled it, and also pulled corn. They had to grow their peanuts and everything they ate, except their flour, sugar, and coffee. They had coupons to get that.

Q - When was your grandmother's birthday?

A - She was born March 19, 1880.

Q - How was the plumbing?

A - Like I said before no running water. So they had to warm their water on a wood stove in a number three wash tub. They killed a hog to make their soap, they made it out of his fat. They had an outdoor toilet. They didn't have any toilet tissue, so they used a Sears and

Robuck catalog.

Q - How did they get their clothing?

A - Well, they some ordered from a catalog and some they made.

Q - How was transportation then?

A - They had horses and buggies, no automobiles like we have now. Whenever they had a funeral and the buggy bogged down, they would have to get more horses and buggies to help them. They would help the buggies to the road. There were no highways, just old dirt roads.

Q - How was it during the winter time?

A - They would have to go out in the snow up to their knees to gather up fire wood.

Q - What kept your great-grandmother and her family warm?

A - Well, her mother made quilts from the old scraps of material.

Q - Did your great-grandmother have an education?

A - She went to the fifth grade. She had to quit because she had to help in the fields.

Q - What church did she go to?

A - First Methodist Church in Georgia. Her mother stayed home on Sundays and killed a chicken for everyone to eat after church. The preacher would come and eat with them. He would also spend the night with them and leave the next morning.

Q - How many family gatherings did they have?

A - Most of their relatives lived so far away that they had to come down every other weekend. They would come on a Friday evening and leave on Sunday after lunch. They would only bring some clothes to wear.

Q - What kind of games did the

children play?
A - They would play ring around the rosie, and red rover. They would get a ball and three or four of them would throw the ball over the house and catch it. Then while the ball was on its way over they would yell, "Red red rover the ball is coming over." Her father dipped snuff and after the snuff bottle was empty the girls would play like it was their car. Then they would go out to the corn field and they would get dry corn silk to make them a doll. They would get their mother's old scraps she wasn't using and put them on the doll to make it have clothes. The boys would get sticks, nail a bead on the end and push it for a car. During Christmas time the kids would get a pair of their mother's stockings and hang it up over the fireplace. At night her mother would put candy, apples, and a hand full of nuts in them. Her mother would bake some pies and cakes and tell the children that Santa Claus was going to stop in and take bites out of each of item.

Q - How did your great-grandmother die?
A - She died of a heart attack in 1953, at he age of 83.

FRANCES BARR

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Interview with my grandmother, Irene Campbell, about her grandmother, Jenny Swearening Smith - by Crystal Strain.

Q - Where was she born?
A - Alabama. She moved about four miles out of Gary which was called Zuber, on the Swearening Place when she was nine years old with her foster parents,the Swearenings. That's why all this is called the Swearening Place over there by the Beaver Pond. They lived there during the Civil War, in which Grandpa Smith fought. Being wounded, Grandpa Smith, after the war was over, came over with some of his friends from Georgia. They met and then married, when she was twenty - one. Soon after that, they bought a five hundred acre farm between Gary and Woods Community. They lived there and never moved.

They had four kids. They built a log house, and after about forty years they put wood around it on the outside. There was a hall down between parts of the house. There were three bedrooms on one side, a bedroom, a kitchen, and a dining room on the other side, and a pantry on the back, where they put their canned stuff. They raised all of their children on the farm.

She lived to 94 and he lived to be 96. He died two weeks before she did. She prayed all the time that she would live longer than he did and her pravers were answered. They were both bedridden for four years before they died. She was a real good Christian woman. They went

in a wagon to the woods, the post office and the church with their kids every Sunday. Then as the kids started to marry they gave them a sixty acre farm. I still live on the farm that was given to my daddy. The reason she was bedridden for four years, was because a snake bit her on the leg and it turned black and rotted. She cooked for years in a wheelchair, and never complained. She would just get in that wheelchair and cook the best food.

The house was high because there was a cellar underneath and at the back there was a peach tree. I want you to know if we acted up that's where she headed. She would go out there and get one of those limbs. She never called it a whipping, she called it neddling. She never showed any difference in any of her thirty grand kids. They would all want to go down there and stay. We slept on pallets made of quilts. They were lined up all down the halls with kids sleeping on them. She would make us biscuits, bacon and syrup for breakfast.

They cured the bacon in barrels and poured syrup on it and it would keep there all year. It was the best bacon ever. They milked a lot of cows and she had two wells in the backyard, one was what she washed in and the other was what she kept her milk in. She would churn every morning. She molded butter to put on the table. They would pick bushels and bushels of peaches. They also had big pieces of tin that they would dry their peaches on. When she shelled peas in the summer time they would thrash their peas, and she had big jugs that she put her peas in. She bought Hi - Life and put it in little containers, then she

would put them down in her peas, and that would keep the weevils out. She had stuff year round.

IRENE CAMPBELL

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Interview with my grandmother, Doris Farley, about her grandmother, Alice Minter Farley - by Amy Singleton.

Q - What was her name?
A - Alice Minter Farley.
Q - Where did she live?
A - She lived in South Louisiana in a small town called Dubock.
Q - What did her house look like?
A - She lived in a plain wooden frame house. It kinda resembled a box. It was always nice, neat, and well taken care of.
Q - Whom did she marry?
A - She married a man named Curtis Farley.
Q - How many children did she have?
A - She had a fairly good size family. She had four children, three boys and one girl.
Q - What did she do for a living?
A - She mostly raised her family. She also made clothes for some of the people in the town. She cooked three meals a day for her family. She worked alongside the men in the fields plowing and planting.
Q - What was her personality like?
A - She was a very even tempered woman. You would never have heard her use a bit of bad language.
Q - What was Christmas like at her house?
A - She always cooked good food. We would spend the night with her on Christmas Eve. We would have pallets laid out on the floor, wall to wall. We

wouldn't get much sleep as we would stay up all night talking and listening for Santa Claus. Daddy usually woke us up on Christmas morning. He would be more excited about Santa coming then we were. Our presents usually consist of a box full of nuts and fruit.

Q - Did you enjoy going to your grandmother's house?

A - Yes, I enjoyed it very much.

Q - What would you do when you visited her?

A - We would usually work. She would let us sweep the floor and the front porch. When we were through grandmother would have to inspect it. We also would go gather eggs. All of us loved to go to the old metal barn and pull peanuts. In the summer we would have to shell peas. We hated to do this.

Q - When did she die?

A - April 14, 1967.

Rita Davis Nina Adams Doris Farley

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Clara Latham

I was born in Shelby County in 1909. My parents, Hiram and Tresie Ann Cozart, were just everyday farmers. I went to school at Gary and at the time the school was a two story building (It's the white house up the road from the school). The classrooms always had a good atmosphere. The teachers were very understanding and also very strict. Some of the teachers were: J.R. Nicholas, Emma Brannon, Syble Reed, and Maude Hull. The classmates were friendly and we all loved each other and we would always share lunches. We were not allowed to play games with the boys; so the boys stayed on one side of the school yard and the girls on the other. We would play ring games outside and the boys would play basketball in the dirt, but when it would rain we would play jacks inside. Everyday after school the boys would have to get wood for the wood - heater, so we would have it for

the next morning. I played basketball for about three years. I didn't play much though, I wasn't very good. I also played volleyball. The girls made their own uniforms. They were the school colors, although the pants were longer than they are now a days.

I graduated from Gary in 1926 and then went on to S.F.A. to become a teacher. After I finished at S.F.A. I came back to Gary to teach. I taught school for twenty - one years; three years at Clayton and eighteen years at Gary. The only sports were basketball. We had literary society every Friday afternoon. You either gave a poem or a declamation. When I was in school they didn't make lesson plans. I did when I was teaching. The work we did was mostly the three R's (reading, writing, arithmetic). I enjoyed every minute of my teaching at Gary, but some of the students I don't think did. I had a good relationship with most of the students. There's always a few that show out. I retired in '73 and then substituted for awhile. I could tell there was a little difference in the way they disciplined them. Like when I went into an English class or something, my students had their written assignments, I expected them to be quiet unless the bell rang. The changes I saw in school over the years was gradually the physical part, like the shops. I don't suppose this is a discipline problem. I guess it's manners, but the boys wanted to come in with their hat on and not sit like they should in a seat. They would sit astride it.

When my two children, Joann and Hiram Lee, were in school we had a big

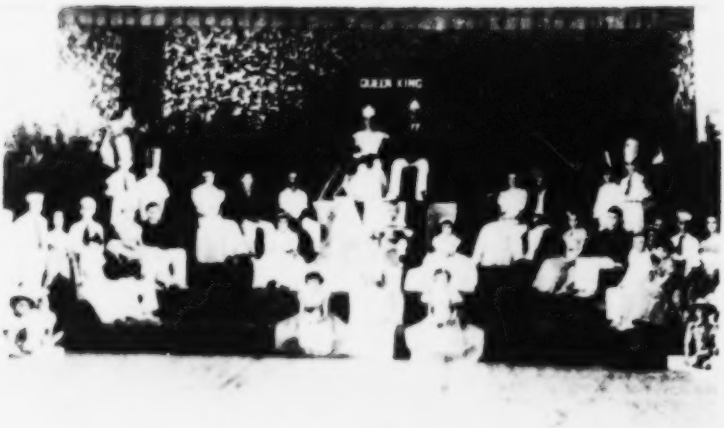
band. This was about 1955 - 1963. I don't know how many pieces, but the uniforms were always expensive. We also had a marching band. I think the school has gradually grown all the time. Although it was small, I don't think I heard anyone, maybe two people, say they were ashamed of coming from Gary. Gary has turned out some good students; engineers and some doctors of education, just professional people. Our superintendent kept scores for several years on the seniors. The classes were much smaller in Gary, but many Gary students went ahead and furthered their education and got good jobs. There's always been a lot of activities in Gary; you could be a teacher, president of the P.T.A. , or a homeroom mother. A homeroom mother is where you serve refreshments every so often. About three years before I retired we got a good classroom teachers organization. We went on trips just like the homemakers do.

I enjoyed teaching, but when Gary incorporated and got water and gas, Joe (my husband) had to quit teaching to become mayor. He taught junior high science and math. I taught for about three or four more years, but they asked me to quit at age 65. I enjoyed all my co-workers (teachers). Some teachers, I remember, were the superintendent, Mr. Hooper; principal, Stanley Yarbrough; Bobby Reider; Mr. King; John and Katy Wright; and Mary Ann Franks.

I am certainly not boasting but I would be so happy if I knew each student in all my classes remembered that their books were only springboards to learn more and that each day they learned something that would help them become a

53

better citizen. It still excites me when I see a co-worker or an ex-student and I appreciate the fact most of them hug my neck.



1924 - Gary School.

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(back row) Ovid Heaton, James Simms, Sterling Graves, Carol Thomas. (front row) Dera Vaughn, Clara Cozart, Lula May Gary, Opal Heaton, Floy Heaton, Lucille Graves. Class of 1926.

Olie Belle Graves Thomas, Clara Cozart (Latham), Lois Knight, Vesta Graves Brannon, Lula May Gary, Agnes Hopkins Freeman.

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Sometime in the twenties at Gary School.

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Sometime in the twenties at Gary School.

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